AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO ADDRESS

Entrepreneurial Education

Saskatchewan
Economic and
Co-operative
Development

Saskatchewan
Education

Executive Summary

In Saskatchewan's economic development strategy, Partnership for Growth, there is an objective to "nurture private and co-operative enterprise so that by 1999, when surveyed, high school students will understand that going into business is a career option."

The initiative focuses on entrepreneurship awareness in Saskatchewan's K-12 education system and identifies opportunities to stimulate and support entrepreneurship.

The implementation plan is a joint effort between Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development and Saskatchewan Education that proposes six broad implementation initiatives:

1) Working through Saskatchewan Education's **Core Curriculum** to promote entrepreneurial awareness;
2) Advancing **business partnerships** to involve the business community, co-operative sectors and the school system;
3) Creating **teacher linkages** to help them instill a more comprehensive entrepreneurial awareness;
4) Supporting **pilot projects** to identify the best practices for entrepreneurial education in high schools;
5) Developing **entrepreneurship educational resources** to make entrepreneurship and co-operative educational materials, tools and resources easily accessible to Saskatchewan teachers and students;
6) Establishing an **implementation monitoring** process to provide support in delivering this plan.

Purpose

As the world becomes more competitive, we need more individuals involved in entrepreneurship, inventing new products and developing new services. We need more effort in the area of research and development, innovation, and strengthening the linkages to commercialization.

Saskatchewan's response to the new global environment is contained in the second phase of the province's economic development strategy, ***Partnership for Growth.*** Launched February 1996, this strategy sets out the following vision for the Saskatchewan economy:

> *As we move into the 21st century, the Saskatchewan economy will realize its potential to provide prosperity, jobs and security for Saskatchewan people. Business, co-operatives, working people, governments and communities will have worked together to achieve this goal.*

Within the strategy document, the government outlines 21 strategic initiatives aimed at achieving economic growth. One of these initiatives is the entrepreneurship objective described on the preceding page. The action plan to achieve this objective is as follows:

I. Work with education institutions and organizations to deliver a more focused, co-ordinated and effective presentation of business and co-operative entrepreneurship as career options, and

II. Support partnerships and associations to improve entrepreneurial and co-operative education.

The following document outlines the implementation plan jointly devised by Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development and Saskatchewan Education to achieve this objective.

Rationale for Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a key to job creation in Saskatchewan. Entrepreneurs, working alone or in co-operatives, create the small businesses that provide most of the jobs in this province. About 92% of all Saskatchewan firms are small,[1] and they account for 40% of total private sector employment. About 73% of new jobs are created by new and growing small businesses.

Saskatchewan has a long tradition of dedication to the co-operative way of doing business and providing services. The study of entrepreneurship, co-operative principles, business practices and philosophy is critical to understanding Saskatchewan's history and economy.

The creation of a positive environment for economic growth is, in part, dependent on entrepreneurship and co-operative development.

The ***Partnership for Growth*** strategy acknowledges that one of Saskatchewan's most valuable assets is its innovative and enterprising people. It is imperative that young people be made aware of entrepreneurship and co-operative development as career options. Youth must acquire the confidence, skills and knowledge to undertake the important task of contributing to our future wealth and jobs.

Entrepreneurship Defined

There are many definitions of entrepreneurship, all of which share some common features including innovation, critical thinking, structured planning, and risk assessment. The most important commonality of the definitions is the **action** of venturing forward. To that end, our intention is to create an entrepreneurial awareness.

There are many common characteristics and skills that are specific to entrepreneurs. These include: self-confidence and self-reliance; innovation, creativity and versatility; energy and task commitment; a strong sense of personal awareness; willingness to take initiative; and leadership.

[1]Defined as having fewer than 50 employees or less than $5 million in annual sales.

Current Initiatives

Saskatchewan Education

Goals of Saskatchewan Education

Meeting the challenges of the shift to a knowledge-based society is vital. Entrepreneurial education can contribute to the realization of the goals of education throughout Saskatchewan by emphasizing nine fundamental goals: basic skills (reading, writing, computing), life-long learning, understanding and relating to others, self-concept development, positive lifestyle, spiritual development, career and consumer decisions, membership in society, and growing with change.

Core Curriculum – Common Essential Learnings (CELs)

The pursuit of the Common Essential Learnings (CELs) contributes to the attainment of employability skills that include academic skills, personal management skills and teamwork skills. The CELs are a set of six interrelated areas containing understandings, values, skills and processes that are considered important as foundations of learning in all school subjects and incorporated across all grade levels. The CELs include: communication, numeracy, critical and creative thinking, technological literacy, personal and social values and skills, and independent learning.

Work Experience Education / Work Study

The 1987 *Work Experience Education (WEE) Guidelines* describe a series of courses in Work Experience Education where students learn about work through classroom content and workplace experience. One of the courses at the grade 12 level includes content specific to entrepreneurship. In addition to discreet courses, the *WEE Guidelines* also include information describing how teachers may incorporate a work study component in other courses, allowing students an opportunity for workplace learning in the context of a specific subject area.

Business and education have entered into mutually beneficial partnerships to implement and maintain work experience/work study in Core Curriculum. Many placements allow students to learn from successful entrepreneurs in their communities.

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Entrepreneurship 30

The most distinctive entrepreneurial course within Core Curriculum in the high schools is the Entrepreneurship 30 elective. The broad aim of this course is to encourage an individual's potential to initiate personal, co-operative, community and business ventures through an emphasis on:

- awareness
- business environment
- self-image
- personal-use skills
- business attitudes and entrepreneurship
- communications
- employment skills

The course is designed to enable the student to:

- develop skills that may contribute to entrepreneurial behaviour;
- examine needs, wants and problems;
- find opportunities to fulfill the needs or wants and solve the problems;
- generate innovative ideas to satisfy the opportunities;
- assess the opportunities and ideas;
- use all the available sources and resources to come up with the best possible solution;
- plan the venture thoroughly using as many available tools as possible.

In addition to creating a venture, these skills are relevant to career decisions and choices which an individual may make.

Partnership Initiatives

Partnership Agreement on Rural Development

Saskatchewan Education continues to provide consultative support to external groups working on entrepreneurial education projects. An example is the Sagehill Community Futures Corporation (CFC) Entrepreneurship Project which is partially funded by the Partnership Agreement on Rural Development (PARD). This is a partnership between Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development and the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) to design resource support for teaching entrepreneurial concepts to youth in grades 6 through 12.

Co-operatives Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Saskatchewan Education and the Canadian Co-operative Association have established an MOU aimed at enhancing students' knowledge and understanding of the history, philosophy, principles and business practices of co-operatives. The MOU states that the youth of Saskatchewan:

"...will be better equipped to be productive agents in the continuing development of the province if they appreciate the value of co-operating with each other and if they understand the practical application of co-operation to forms of enterprise that meet people's needs... High school students should leave school with an understanding of co-operation, the basic ideology of co-operatives, the co-operative organizational model, the existing co-operative sector, and the history of the development of co-operatives."

The MOU addresses how best to infuse these ideas into the K-12 curriculum in Saskatchewan, including entrepreneurial education.

Junior Achievement

The purpose of Junior Achievement (JA) is to provide high school students with practical business experience together with insights into the complexities of the profit system. These objectives are met by bringing students together with adult business advisors for 2.5 or more hours a week for 26 weeks.

JA is financed through the business community, which also provides advisors to act as management consultants to the students in the operation of their companies. JA provides students with an opportunity to acquire basic business knowledge and work experience and to develop interpersonal skills.

Proposed Implementation Initiatives

The following initiatives are components of the implementation plan:

Core Curriculum

Core Curriculum is designed to provide a broad and balanced education to all students in the province. It provides opportunities to select from a diverse range of courses to meet the needs and interests of all students. Core Curriculum is made up of seven required areas of study, specified electives and unspecified electives. Through the curriculum development process, entrepreneurship awareness will be raised.

Objectives:

- To seek advice from business and education partners in the design of new curricula and to identify opportunities for entrepreneurial learning.
- To assist Saskatchewan Education in the design of new and revised curricula so as to identify appropriate opportunities for the incorporation of entrepreneurial and co-operative education concepts and activities.
- To use a variety of instructional approaches to enable students to experience entrepreneurial learning both in the classroom and outside the school (e.g. to provide opportunities for a work-study component in course delivery).
- To consult and collaborate with students and teachers in the process of designing and delivering effective entrepreneurial education opportunities.
- To identify, encourage and develop post-secondary education opportunities and programs, and to build upon secondary courses and programs in entrepreneurship.
- To maintain the MOU between Saskatchewan Education and the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) regarding the incorporation and integration into the curriculum of co-operative education concepts.

Implementation Plan:

1) Work with the Practical and Applied Arts Reference Committee to develop curriculum in the Practical and Applied Arts.

2) Provide or promote appropriate professional development teacher in-service through Summer Short Courses in conjunction with professional partners.

3) Identify and design resources specific to entrepreneurial education that assist in the integration and incorporation of entrepreneurial education across the curriculum.

4) Explore existing post-secondary education courses and programs in Saskatchewan and other provinces and formulate articulation agreements where possible.

5) Explore opportunities to secure funding for the implementation of projects that involve entrepreneurship developed under the provincial Future Skills initiative.

Business Partnerships

This initiative would act as a bridge between the skill set provided by the schools and the implementation of skills in various environments. As most of the new jobs being created flow from small businesses, it is important that a concerted effort be made to underscore the value of entrepreneurial skills in all work endeavours.

Objectives:

- Encourage the business community and co-operative sector to join with the school system to provide a well-rounded approach to the study of entrepreneurship.
- Partner with business and co-operatives to bring all aspects of entrepreneurship clearly into focus for students.

Implementation Plan:

1) Develop a Speaker's Bureau consisting of a diverse group of individuals willing to go into the schools to discuss all facets of entrepreneurship, as well as personal experiences, to illustrate entrepreneurial behaviour.

2) Explore opportunities to use the Internet to exchange information.

3) Emphasize a work-study component to give students an opportunity to work in an environment that demands the use of the skills they have acquired in school.

4) Participate in the **Take Our Kids to Work Program**, a Canada-wide initiative to affirm the value of entrepreneurial education through partnership projects.

5) Provide students with the opportunity to visit local businesses where entrepreneurial skills are put into practice.

6) Give students the opportunity to experience venturing where appropriate, and to integrate learning in other 'business-oriented' areas to assist in the acquisition of the necessary related skills.

7) Explore entrepreneurship awareness opportunities to be conducted during national business and co-operatives weeks.

This process can be furthered through partnership agreements between the schools and businesses. This initiative is not limited to a classroom setting and should be viewed as a means to broaden the scope of entrepreneurial learning.

Teacher Linkages

Teachers within the high school system are key to promoting entrepreneurship as a career option. However, available entrepreneurial tools and materials are not always easily accessible to Saskatchewan teachers.

Objective:

• To provide access and assistance to teachers to help them instill a more comprehensive entrepreneurial awareness.

Implementation Plan:

1) Seek a commitment from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) to support the entrepreneurial initiative.

2) Work with Special Subject Councils of the STF to develop strategies and approaches for effective entrepreneurial education through liaison with department committees such as the Practical and Applied Arts Reference Committee.

3) Communicate through appropriate mechanisms to ensure Saskatchewan teachers are aware of the resources available through other initiatives within this implementation plan.

4) Provide appropriate professional development opportunities for teachers to incorporate entrepreneurial education into the curriculum, and encourage the participation of a broad cross-section of educators in these professional development opportunities.

Support of Pilot Projects

Pilot projects can help determine the best ways to include entrepreneurial education in the high school program. Saskatchewan Education and Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development will provide expertise in the design and testing of pilot projects.

Objective:

• To help determine the best practices to advance and include entrepreneurial education in the high school program.

Implementation Plan:

1) Support the Northern Education Region to design programs to meet the needs of northern students and communities in the distinct labour market of northern Saskatchewan.

2) Promote the Southwest Education Region as the site for a regional pilot in entrepreneurial education.

3) Solicit additional pilot projects from individual school divisions where K-12 Future Skills pilot projects indicated an interest in entrepreneurial education.

As lead departments, Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development and Saskatchewan Education will work together to ensure the realization of the objectives.

Entrepreneurship Educational Resources

Access to materials, tools and resources, whether in print, on-line, multimedia or human, is critical in supporting this initiative, as well as all of the proposed implementation activities.

Objective:

• To make entrepreneurship and co-operative educational materials, tools and resources easily accessible to Saskatchewan teachers and students, to expand the concepts of entrepreneurship and co-operative development through the creation of a 'virtual resource centre'.

Implementation Plan:

1) Complete the database begun as part of the transition-to-work initiative in conjunction with the proposed pilot project in the Southwest Education Region. As entrepreneurship education comprises part of this initiative, this database could provide the foundation for the 'resource centre'.

2) Develop a database similar to that of the Southwest Education Region which would give particular consideration to the cultural needs of northern students, as part of the proposed pilot project involving the Northern Education Region.

3) Establish the linkages between the ***Partnership for Growth*** initiative on information technology and the entrepreneurial educational 'resource centre'.

Implementation Monitoring

There are many groups and organizations involved or interested in entrepreneurial education. This implementation plan will benefit by involving these groups and organizations.

Objective:

• Establish a steering committee with representation from involved organizations to monitor and report on progress, conduct evaluations and make recommendations.

Implementation Plan:

1) Develop the terms of reference and establish the steering committee.

2) Explore the feasibility of a regional committee structure to assist in entrepreneurial awareness.

3) Evaluate the entrepreneurship initiative.

The Process of Evaluation

As required in ***Partnership for Growth,*** *a survey of high school students should be conducted to gauge their appreciation of "... going into business is a career option." At the present time there are approximately 196,000 students in the kindergarten to grade 12 school system. There are about 11,000 students graduating annually from Saskatchewan high schools.*

The best evaluative method is to survey high school students to determine whether "...students understand that going into business is a career option." In accordance with the specific actions identified in ***Partnership for Growth,*** *this survey would be administered to 1999 high school graduates. Saskatchewan Education will assist in this survey by distributing the questionnaires to Saskatchewan high schools.*